REPORT

PLASTIC LAMINATE BATH TUB SURROUNDS

Architectural Services
Technical Support Services Branch

July 1988

R E P O R T

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to record the evaluation on the installation, performance and tenant satisfaction regarding laminate type bathtub wall surrounds.

BACKGROUND

1. As an alternative to ceramic tiling, plastic laminates, similar to kitchen counter type are formed to provide a three-sided enclosure in the required height, usually 1500 mm [5'0"] and applied to the walls over bathtub using adhesives.

2. The enclosure is fitted with a J-moulding around the vertical and top horizontal edges and sealed with anti-mildew silicone sealant all around including the edges along the rim of the bathtub to achieve a moisture proof barrier around three sides of the tub.

3. The plastic laminates most commonly used are either Formica or Arborite brand. Both have C.M.H.C. acceptance number and conform to Ontario Building Code in respect of flame spread rating [maximum permissible is 200] and smoke development classification [maximum permissible is 300]. Other approved plastic laminates are equally acceptable.

4. As previously evaluated, this type of enclosure is priced up to 15% less than ceramic tiling and is completely installed in half the time. [The cost of the enclosure is approximately $300/unit installed; including preparation of the drywall subsurface]. This evaluation, therefore, was aimed only at the installation, performance and maintenance part of the product.

5. The following two manufacturers and installers have extensive experience in this type of work:

    1. Showerwall Industries
       941 Cobalt Crescent
       Thunder Bay

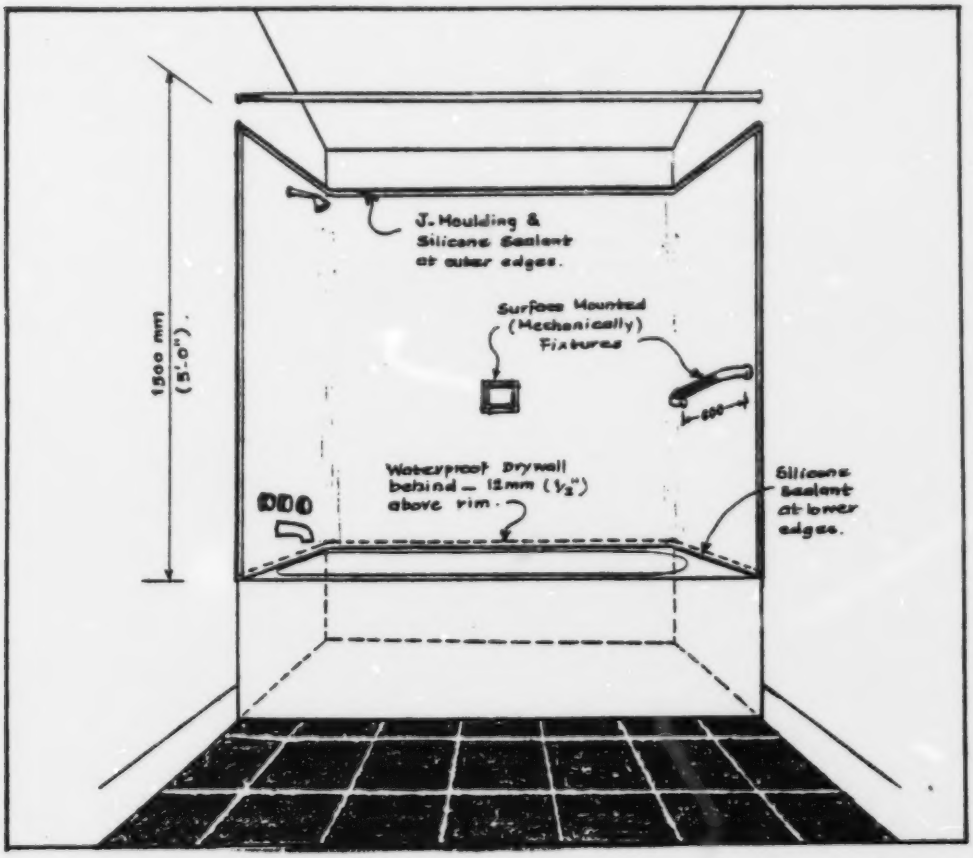
    2. MBA Manufacturing
       175 Toryork Road
       Toronto

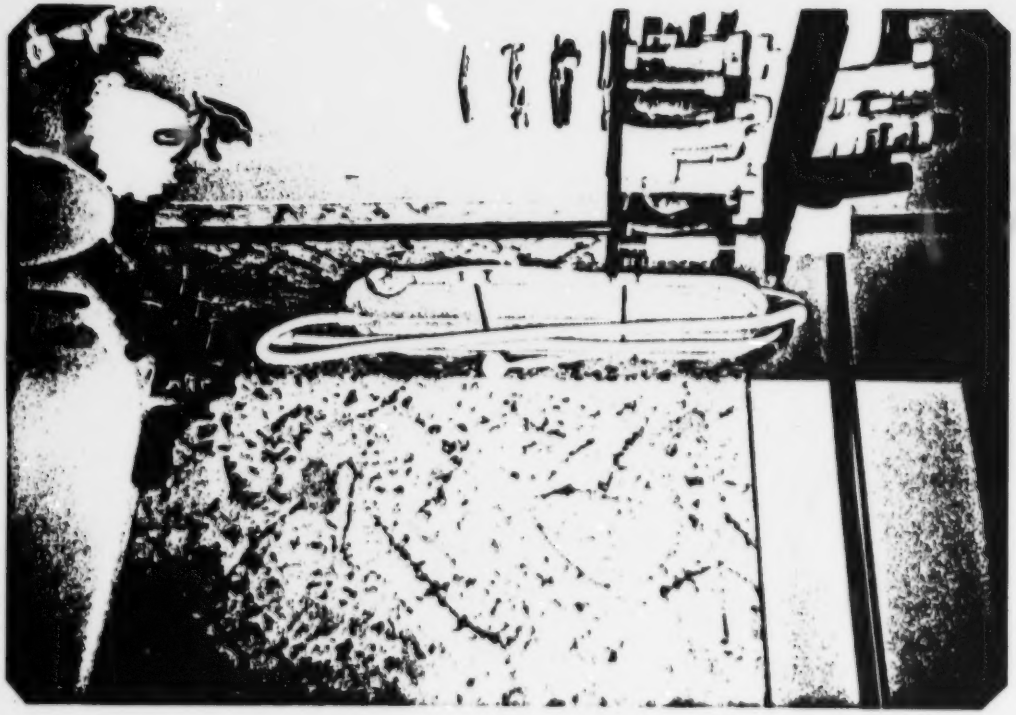
    Other manufacturers and installers with proven records are equally acceptable.

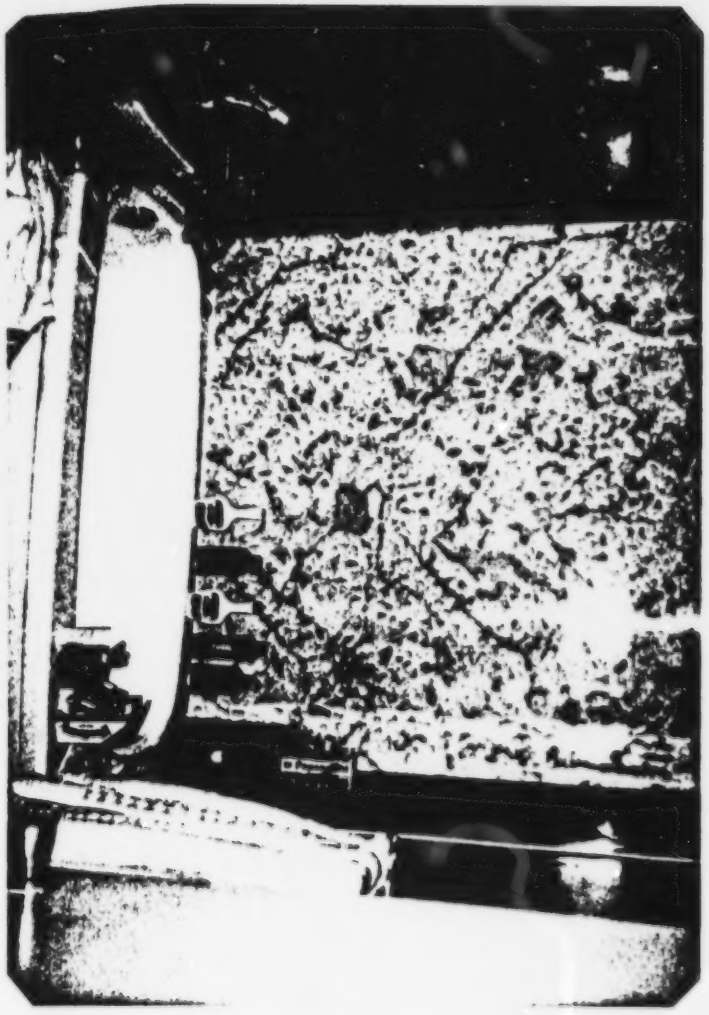
6. The following projects were inspected to form the basis of evaluation and recommendations:

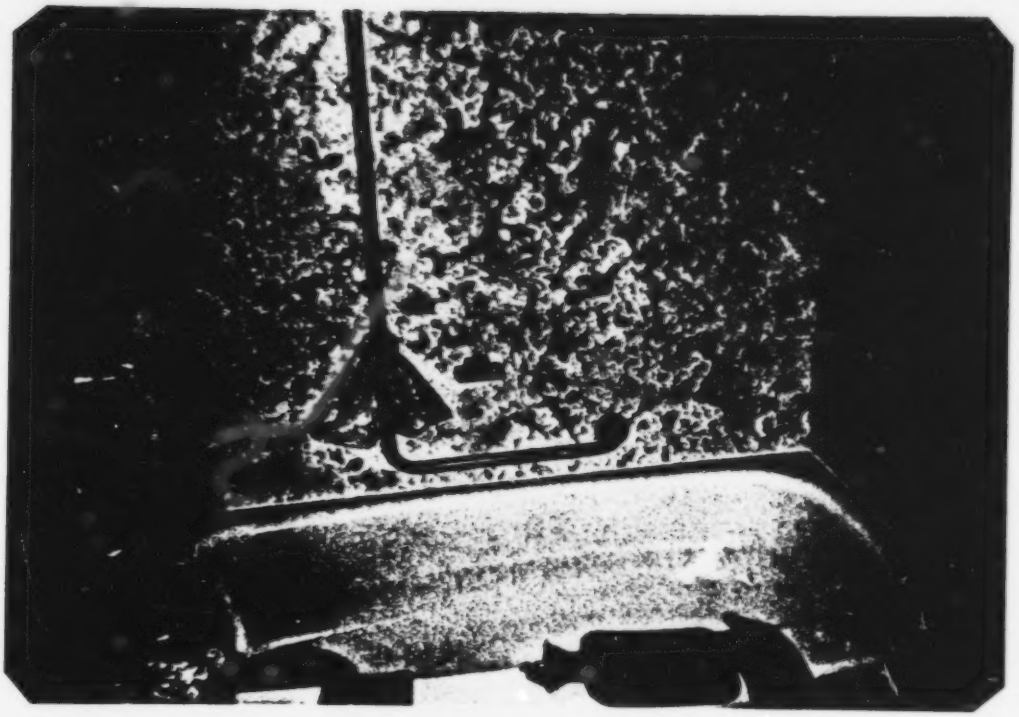
Units E-41 F-52 F-54	Limbrick Family Housing Municipal Non-Profit Project, Thunder Bay.
Units 7 9	Village Park Senior Citizen Private Non-profit Project, Kakabeka.
Units 121 131	Picton Avenue Family Housing Municipal Non-profit Project, Thunder Bay.

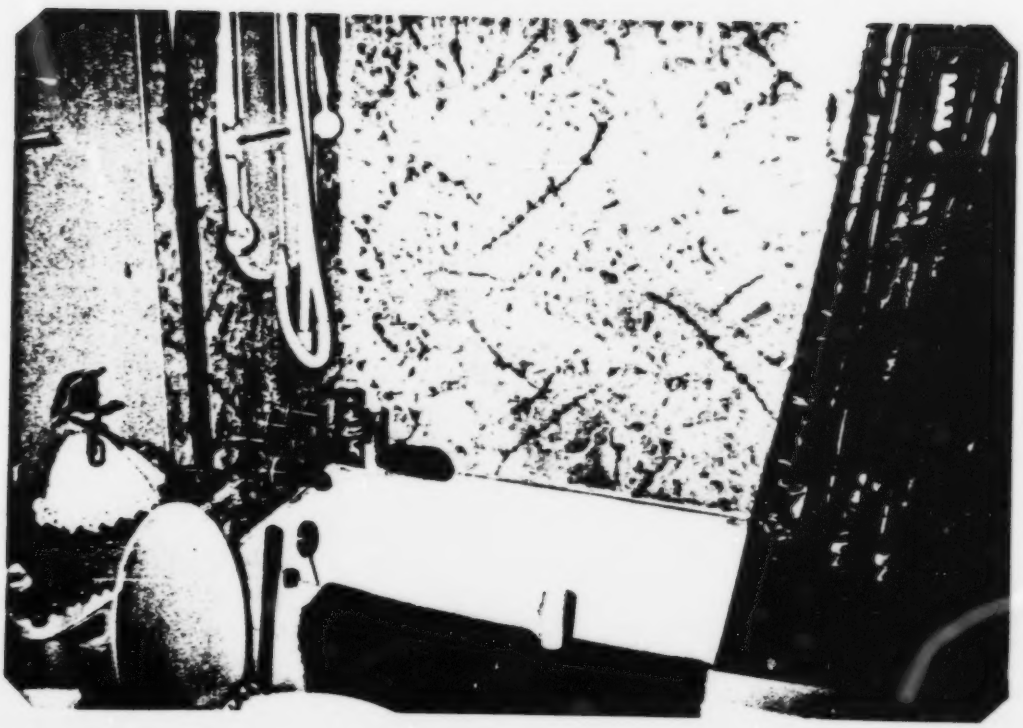
The surrounds have been in place for a period varying from 2 to 5 years in the above projects.

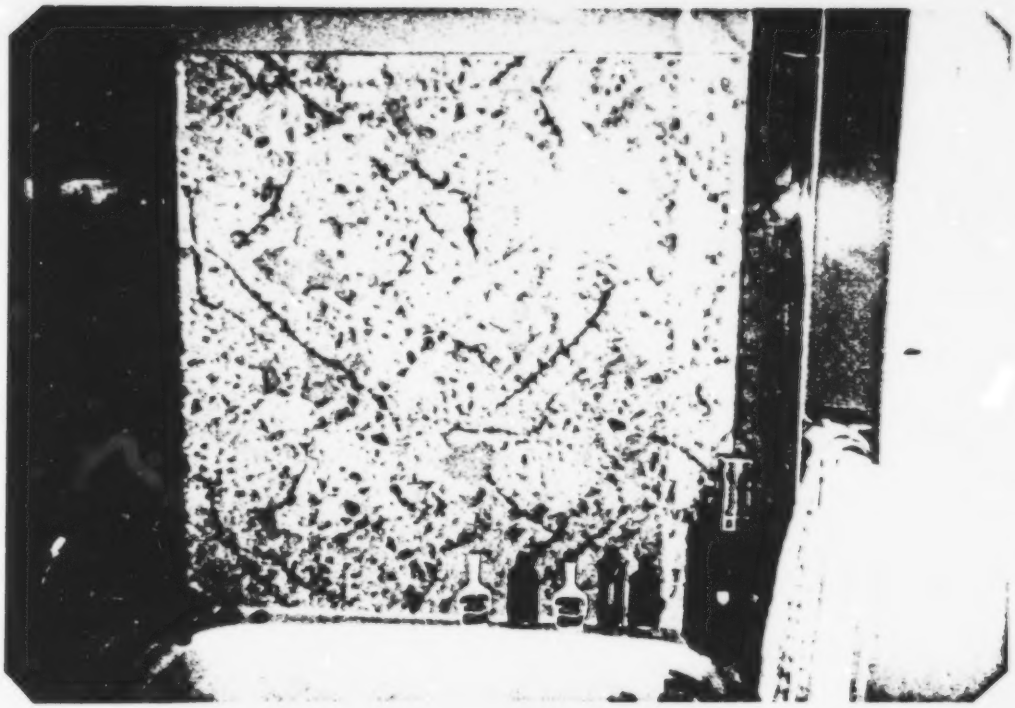

J. Moulding & Silicone Sealant at outer edges.
Surface Mounted (Mechanically) Fixtures
1500 mm (5'-0").
Waterproof Drywall behind — 12mm (½") above rim.
Silicone Sealant at lower edges.

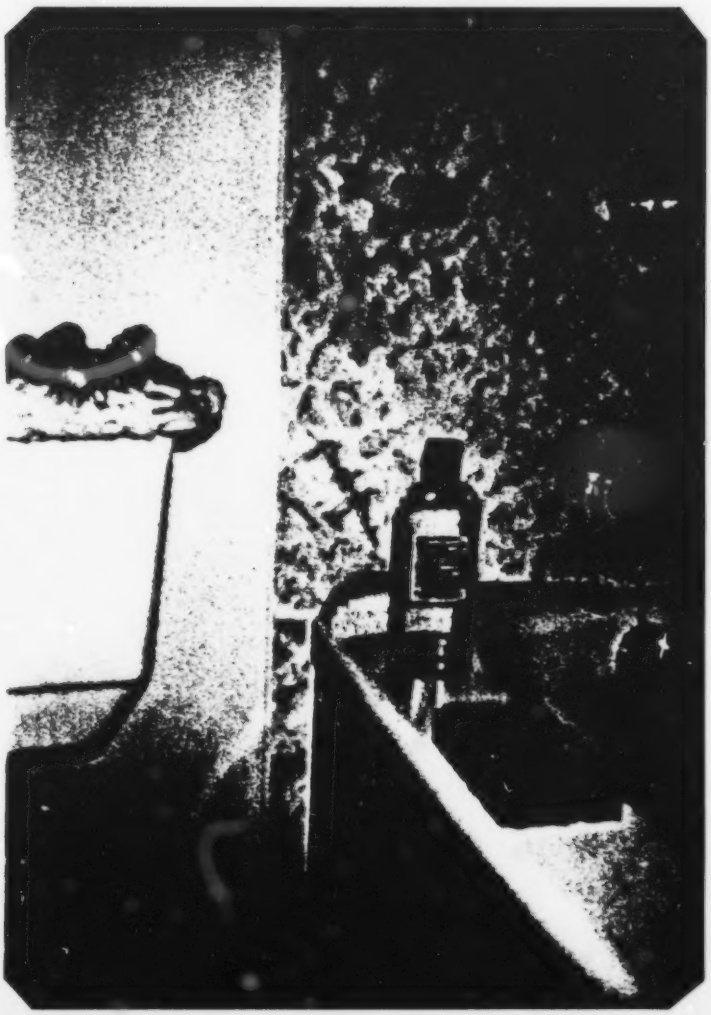












R E P O R T

EVALUATION

1.	**Installation**	-	Neat, clean and professional looking finish.
		-	See attached photograph.
		-	Some tenants prefer the look and feel of ceramic tiles. This enclosure gives an appearance of institutional or commercial bathroom.
2.	**Performance**	-	Appeared almost new in all units.
		-	Fully adhered to the wall, no delamination or bubbling.
		-	No cracking or chipping.
		-	Edges sealed and caulked.
		-	Some scratching noticeable on gloss-finished enclosures.
		-	No mold or mildew visible on any part of the enclosure.
		-	See attached photographs.
3.	**Maintenance**	-	Allows easy-wipe cleaning with soapy sponge or glass cleaner liquids.
		-	Requires recaulking approximately every five [5] years to be maintained as complete water-proof barrier.
		-	Cleaning with abrasive detergents causes scratching, particularly on those units with gloss finish.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The closure should be a one-piece unit, custom formed to precise site measurements to ensure a perfect fit. Premoulded units or units with vertical/horizontal joints should not be accepted.

2. All enclosures should be drilled, routed at site at exact positions for taps, shower head, grab bars, soap dishes, etc. Inspector should ensure that there are no overcuts. It is critical that holes are drilled or routed with sharp bits and that they are perfectly round and smooth.

3. Walls to which the unit adheres should receive waterproof drywall, with screws countersunk and joints filled with drywall compound. Drywall should be installed 1/2" up above the factory lip of the bathtub. [This space should then be filled with silicone sealants after enclosure installation]. Walls should be prepared even and plumb.

4. Only high grade or industrial strength, fire retardant contact cement should be applied in full coat. Additionally entire surface should receive beads of liquid nails at a maximum of 100 mm centers. Edges should be sealed with hot glue system.

5. Enclosures with premolded soap dishes, shampoo racks, etc. should not be specified. The original taps, shower head, grab bars, soap dishes should be removed for reinstallation.

6. All fixtures and fitments should be surface mounted. Any loose blocking or backing for anchoring should be resecured. Recessed fixtures cause splitting and cracking of the unit due to lack of any reinforcement around the cut. Adhesive mounted fixtures should not permitted.

7. Horizontal grab bars on the short wall should be kept sufficiently away from the rounded corner. If the grab bar cannot be centered over the tub, it should be cut to a shorter length, approximately 450 mm [18"].

8. The edges of the unit should be fitted with J-cap molding and sealed with an anti-mildew flexible silicone sealant. Openings for faucets, spout, shower, grab bars, soap; dish should also be sealed with silicone sealant.

9. Only velour finish is recommended. It is easier to clean. Also water, soap, shampoo films, scratches from abrasive cleansers do not show. Nevertheless, cleaning with abrasive powders should be avoided. Neutral colours would blend better with rest of the finishing colours.

10. A requirement on a signed certificate warranting that the enclosure will not leak, crack or separate from wall surface for a period of twenty [20] years should be included in the Tender Call.

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MA:AM

July 29, 1988